

THE MALTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MALTA AND MAZZINI

PROCEEDINGS OF HISTORY WEEK
2005



edited by
SIMON MERCECA

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THE MALTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MALTA
2007

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

Giuseppe Mazzini a Prophet for Modern Times

The figure of Giuseppe Mazzini is generally associated with the history of the Italian *Risorgimento*, or the process by which the Italian peninsula achieved Unification. Yet, few people know about Giuseppe Mazzini's political writings, or appreciate that the political ideal they propagate might hold out an ideal that is still relevant to our time. Moreover, very few people know that this political figure had contacts with Malta and that his writings influenced the political development of the Maltese islands in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Mazzini, indeed, surely remains central to European thought generally. For a long time, Mazzini was a lonely Mediterranean voice advocating the concept of liberty, which is considered by Ferdinand Braudel as the hallmark that distinguishes Western civilisation from the rest of the world.

There is no doubt that the agitation for liberty began in Europe through the diffusion of the printed word. Mazzini was an avid writer and considered printing as a means by which to diffuse ideas in favour of freedom, notably the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of religious association. These are today considered as basic elements in any democracy, and are nowadays expressed in the World Charter of Human Rights. He was no anarchist, but a promoter of the rights under the tutelage of a just law.

Yet, Mazzini had already perceived the fragility and paradoxes lying behind concepts of free speech. As with most things that are humanly ordained, there is nothing to guarantee its continuity or permanence. At the same time such a right is the cornerstone of all other civil rights. The proof of this statement can be found in history, and in the discovery that all political systems which deny civil rights target first and above all the right to free speech.

With those general observations in place, let us turn to some biographical considerations and to their relevance for us today. Giuseppe Mazzini was born in Genoa in 1805 and became involved in politics at a very young age. By the age of

25, he had already made an imprint on Italian politics, by establishing what came to be known as *Giovine Italia*, or Young Italy, a political movement aimed towards the political unification of the Italian peninsula. By early 1830s, he transformed this political association into a European movement by setting up the association known as *Giovine Europa*, or Young Europe, an association which aimed towards European Unity. Moreover, the *Giovine Europa* model began slowly to be exported abroad. Even in Malta, an association called *Giovine Malta* was set up in 1901 to promote liberal aspirations.

On the political level, Mazzini was the model of honesty and integrity. In 1848, he became one of the leaders of the Italian insurrection leading to the proclamation of new states in Italy, one of which was that of Rome. Pope Pius IX sought refuge in the town of Gaeta, whilst Mazzini became the head of the Roman Republic. In this new political set up, Mazzini introduced an innovative and fresh approach to government, based on the principles of liberty and on civil and criminal justice, as well as on the struggle against corruption and malpractice. A lawyer by profession and human rights activist by vocation, Mazzini wanted his new republic to be a model of right government in sharp contrast to the Rome of Pius IX, where corruption was rife and capital punishment was practised and served even on political activists. Yet, the Roman Republic had a short life. The wave of revolutions in Europe in 1848 receded and many states, including Italy, had the old regimes restored to power. Mazzini had to seek political exile. Whilst he remained a dominant political figure, he found himself increasingly on the margin of Italian politics. After the revolution of 1848 there was no space for Mazzini's political thinking in Italy. Italian Unification slowly became a monarchical expansion of the Kingdom of Piedmont. A republican by conviction, Mazzini found that his ideas had less currency in the perspectives of this government. Previously staunch republican supporters, such as Francesco Crispi, became convinced that only the monarchy could unite Italy.

However, during the period when Mazzini was sidelined his writings contributed an important phase of his political career. In 1860, Mazzini published his most important work, '*I Doveri del Uomo*', a text which discussed three important fundamental issues for Mazzini. In the spirit of the Enlightenment and following the teaching of Cesare Beccaria, Mazzini strongly advocated the abolition of the death punishment as one of the first duties of man. The second duty was for man to safeguard the right of property, an issue that was under attack at the time from the extreme left parties. The third point was the right for everyone to have a good education.

Mazzini's message is more relevant than ever, since we know that the administration of legal justice is less than admirable in a number of contexts. Mazzini worked

against the practice where justice was served on the basis of personal connections, that is, the contacts that one had with politicians, members of the judiciary or with the prosecuting police officers. In this context, Mazzini's axiom of 'God and the People', coined as a battle cry for the setting up of a modern state based on the principles of a just government and the proper administration of justice, strikes a chord even today.

To better understand these political notions, as well as to have them set in their correct historical framework, Mazzini's history, his relations with Malta and the relevance of his ideas to present day society were the subject of a number of studies by scholars of repute in a three-day international conference held in Malta between the 10th and 12th November 2005 at the Italian Cultural Institute, Valletta. This conference was organized by the Italian Cultural Institute, the Mediterranean Institute and the Malta Historical Society, as part of History Week, a biennial activity of the Malta Historical Society. A number of scholars from Malta and abroad were invited to discuss different aspects of Mazzini's philosophical thought and political teaching. The conference explored how Mazzini's writing influenced local political development, in particular after Malta was granted freedom of the press in 1838. The conference discussed the influence that the liberty of the press had on the diffusion of Mazzini's political ideals in Italy as well as in the political newspapers. The situation of Italian refugees in Malta at the time of the Risorgimento was also analysed. The conference concluded with an analysis of the relevancy of Mazzini's politics to today's society, in particular to the concept of European Unity.

The importance of Mazzini's thought to the history of the Italian Risorgimento and its echoes on Malta was the subject of a paper by the eminent historian on this subject, and general secretary of the Italian Institute for the History of the Risorgimento (*Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento*), Sergio La Salvia. He outlines the main ideas of Mazzini with particular reference to the origins of party politics in Italy. Mazzini can be considered as the father of the Italian political parties. The paper by Salvatore Bono follows a similar line, but with a focus more on the Mediterranean diffusion of Mazzinian ideals.

On the other hand Salvatore Bono focuses on the spread of these ideals through Italian migration. His paper makes references also to Maltese communities in North Africa. Bono analyses the diffusion of the Mazzinian ideals along different planes, and argues that Italy would eventually betray the Risorgimento spirit for freedom with the first attempts at colonial expansion.

The concept of Italian Unity within the historical legal framework of Italy is examined by Francesco Cesare Casula, who argues that the origins of the state of

Piedmont conditioned the process of unity, and that the origins of this state lay in the history of Sardinia.

Henry Frendo's paper considers the relevance of Mazzini's book, *I Doveri Del Uomo*, to Maltese nineteenth- and twentieth-century political history. Frendo comprehensively explores what can be defined as the Mazzinian spirit in Malta, and examines how these were applied in Malta in Mazzinian times and after.

Giovanni Murgia delves into the influence of Mazzini, or lack of it, in relation to the island of Sardinia. He explores the effects of Mazzinian teaching on the island of Sardinia, and discusses the failed attempts by France to annex this island, whilst the undersigned traces the influences that Malta had on Francesco Crispi during his months of exile on the island. It was in Malta that Crispi was exposed to Mazzini's thought. He continued to follow Mazzini until political pragmatism led him to support the Piedmontese monarchy, which under the guidance of Cavour became the main credible force campaigning for unification.

The subject of migration, and related issues, was the focus for the studies of Gerald Bugeja, Joseph Eynaud and Oliver Friggeri. Bugeja outlines the influence that the literary figure of Dante had on the Italian exiles in Malta. Eynaud describes succinctly the spirit of political exiles in Malta through the analysis of their literary writings. Friggieri assesses the influence that Italian émigrés had on Maltese literature.

The granting of the liberty of the press was the subject of Sergio Portelli's paper. Portelli shows the importance that this legislation had for Malta, not only as it led to the diffusion of newspapers, but also as Maltese Italian-language papers became one of the main sources of information in Italy. Thus, until the introduction of the telegraph, Maltese newspapers were a unique source for news in Italy. Arnold Cassola also takes the topic of newspapers for analysis and examines the controversy that the visit of Garibaldi to Malta aroused in local circles.

The Press Ordinance Act is the subject of two other papers. Both Albert Ganado and William Zammit analyse two separate episodes related to the lives of Italian exiles and the diffusion of Mazzinian and propaganda material in favour of the Italian Risorgimento. In his paper, Ganado analysed the covert and overt pressure by the Italian Consul to have the presumed author of a history book, Pasquale Calvi, indicted and imprisoned. The local courts rejected the accusations brought forward, a sentence which Ganado commends. Zammit explores the development of the first printing presses, in particular the one set up by the Naudi family, and how a member

of this family, Giovanni Battista, became involved in spreading Mazzinian ideas in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The papers of Charles Dalli and Peter Serracino-Inglott are more philosophical. Dalli explains the importance of Mazzini's works for the study of historiography, in particular, how Mazzini's political framework for a united Italy was modelled on medieval examples. Medieval history was one of the main sources used by Mazzini to construct an ideal body politic for his dream of a united Italy. Serracino-Inglott speaks about Mazzini's relevance to twenty-first century politics, in particular Mazzini's ideal of a united Europe and the political impasse experienced in the promulgation of a European constitution.

Thus, the proceedings of the conference provide insights into Mazzini's enduring legacy within Italian politics, while also evaluating and confirming the importance of that legacy to the political development of contemporary Maltese society.

Special thanks go to all the sponsors of this conference: the Italian Cultural Institute, the University of Malta and the Malta Historical Society. I owe a special thanks to Dr. Anna Maria Di Marco, the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute, Ms. Patricia Camilleri, Director of the Communications division at the University of Malta, and Dr. Albert Ganado, who was at the time President of the Malta Historical Society, for the personal interest they showed in the conference and for contributing to making both the event and the proceedings possible. Special thanks also go to Mr. Salvatore Mousù for assisting me in the compilation of the index and to Professoressa Anna Porceddu, Dr. Ivan Callus, Mr. David Elyan and Ms. Zahra Meksous for helping me in proof reading the texts. I want also to thank the staff of Veritas Press, in particular Mr. Charles Busuttil, for going out of their way to meet the many editing requests and for providing me with technical assistance. Any remaining shortcomings are of course my own responsibility. Finally I would like to thank all the delegates at the conference for helping to make the conference a success through their participation and discussions.

Dr. Simon Mercieca
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Msida - Malta

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

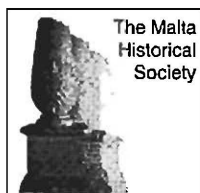
MALTA AND MAZZINI

ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE
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THE ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE (MALTA)
AS PART OF
THE MALTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORY WEEK

10-12 NOVEMBER 2005

PROGRAMME



Mazzini and Malta

Opening

Thursday 10 November 2005

Time

5.45 pm - 6.45 pm

Welcome Address

His Excellency Paolo Andrea Trabalza, Italian Ambassador to Malta

Dott. Anna Maria Di Marco, Director of Italian Institute, Malta

Dr. Albert Ganado, President of the Malta Historical Society

Dr. Simon Mercieca, Director of the Mediterranean Institute, University of Malta

President of Session

Dr. Simon Mercieca

Theme of First Session

Italy, Britain and Malta: Friendships and Conflicts

Henry Frendo

I Doveri dell'Uomo: Mazzinian influences on Maltese Nationalism under British Rule

(University of Malta)

Charles Dalli

Prophet of the Past: History in the Making of Mazzini's Promised Land

(University of Malta)

Salvatore Bono

Il Risorgimento italiano e il Mediterraneo

(University of Perugia)

Coffee Break

6.45 pm - 7.00 pm

Time

7.00 pm - 8.00 pm

Theme of Second Session

Mazzini and the Freedom of the Press in Malta

Albert Ganado

Un'Opera sulla Rivoluzione Siciliana del 1848 stampata a Malta

(Malta Historical Society)

William Zammit

Mazzini and the early Maltese printers: the Naudi episode of 1850

(University of Malta)

Sergio Portelli

La stampa maltese come strumento di lotta politica nel Risorgimento italiano

(University of Malta)

Date

Friday 11 November 2005

President of Session

Dr. Albert Ganado

Time

5.45 pm - 6.45pm

Theme of Third Session

Italian Exiles in Malta

Simon Mercieca

Scoglio Ingrato'; New Light on Francesco Crispi's

(University of Malta)	sojourn in Malta
Gerald Bugeja	<i>Gli esuli italiani a Malta e il mito risorgimentale di Dante.</i>
(University of Malta)	
Sergio La Salvia	“Giuseppe Mazzini e la sua concezione del partito politico
(University - Roma 3)	
Coffee Break	6.45 pm - 7.00 pm
Time	7.00 pm - 7.45 pm
Theme of Fourth Session	The Influence of the Risorgimento on Literature in Malta
Oliver Friggieri	Letteratura degli esuli italiani a Malta durante il Risorgimento.
(University of Malta)	
Joseph Eynaud	“Malta - dimora dei poeti e degli scrittori italiani durante le lotte risorgimentali”.
(University of Malta)	
Arnold Cassola	“ <i>Il Giornal Malti</i> (1864-1866): un esempio di forte polemica anti-garibaldina”.
(University of Malta)	
Date	Saturday 12 November 2005
President of Session	Dr. Anna Maria Di Marco
Time	9.30 am - 10.15 am
Theme of Fifth Session	People's War and National Ideals
Francesco Frasca	“Guerra di popolo, idea nazionale e unità d'Italia: considerazioni geopolitiche nel pensiero mazziniano”.
	Mazzini e la Sardegna
Giovanni Murgia	
(University of Cagliari)	
Francesco Cesare Casula	Giuseppe Mazzini: sardo o italiano?
(CNR Sardinia)	
Coffee Break	10.15 am - 10.30 am
Time	10.30 am - 11.15 am
Theme of sixth Session	Mazzini: A Prophet of Modern Europe
Peter Serracino-Inglott	L'Ideale di Mazzini e la Costituzione Europea
(University of Malta)	
Guido de Marco	Mazzini: A Prophet of Modern Europe.
(President Emeritus)	

